

rights treaty, such as the Convention on Elimination of all Forms of discrimination against Women and the Convention on Elimination of Racial Discrimination, which would minimize proliferation of detailed standards and mechanisms. Other Members, such as Mexico, Venezuela, Sierra Leone, South Africa, Thailand, and Organizations of Persons with Disabilities, promoting, in most cases, the model of a comprehensive convention, such as the Convention on the Rights of the Child, emphasizing on the specificities of the situation of persons with disabilities as their focus in elaborating the Convention.

The draft text by the Working Group, as it stands now, is the result of a hybrid between the two approaches and there are number of complex issues and tasks left to the Ad Hoc Committee for its consideration.

*(3) The issue areas requiring close attention*

The following issues would require close examinations and consultations by the Ad Hoc Committee as the views differed significantly among the Members: definition(s) of disability and persons with disabilities; disability statistics and data collection; international cooperation; special and inclusive education, and the monitoring mechanism(s). The Group did not cover the international monitoring mechanism at this time and focused instead on national frameworks for implementation and monitoring of the convention.

*(4) The third session of the Ad Hoc Committee*

The third session of the Ad Hoc Committee will take place from May 24–June 4 at the United Nations Headquarters in New York. The Ad Hoc Committee will have before it the draft text as a basis for negotiation of the text of an international convention on the rights of persons with disabilities.

IV. THE SIGNIFICANT ROLE PLAYED BY U.S. LEADERS AND ADVOCATES IN DISABILITY RIGHTS IN THE WORK OF THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY

The commitment of the United States to further goals of human equality and dignity for persons with disabilities has been demonstrated in a number of legislative and policy initiatives, such as American with Disabilities Act (1992) and "New Freedom Initiative" (2001), which resulted in a comprehensive set of regulations and enforcement mechanisms and the new disability-sensitized community—leadership of government, organizations of disabilities, countless advocates, scholars, practitioners in disability rights, as well as civic groups. I am delighted to see many of those leaders present at this meeting today. Those leaders have made extraordinary contributions not only to their own society, but also to the work of the international community.

Such outstanding contributions are exemplified in a wide range of activities from legislative and policy initiatives, scholarship, research to advocacy at national, regional and international levels: for example, one of the finest institutions of higher-learning in the United States, University of California at Berkeley co-organized with the United Nations "The United Nations Consultative Expert Meeting on international norms and standards relating to disability (December 1998). The work is considered as a first step to consider promotion of the human rights of persons through the use of international normative framework, including implications of an international convention on the rights of persons with disabilities. A number of US participants and leading scholars participated in both Berkeley and its follow-up meeting (the Interregional Seminar on international norms and standards relating to disability organized by the Equal Opportuni-

ties Commission, Hong Kong SAR, Republic of China).

During the past two sessions of the Ad Hoc Committee and the most recent session of its Working Group in January 2004, US participants as government and NGO representatives, panelists, researchers or individual advocates played a major role in promoting the rights of persons with disabilities. The international community, along with the disability communities worldwide, would have much to gain from the continuing and active participation of the United States in the work of the Ad Hoc Committee and the newly emerging international disability rights movement.

CONCLUSION

As a result of consultations at national, regional and international levels concerning an international convention since the Ad Hoc Committee was established, new networks and communities of disability-sensitized policy makers, programme specialists, academics and advocates have emerged. Together, they are contributing to a process of promoting and developing universal norms and thereby contributing to implementation of the universal human rights for all.

The on-going international discourse on disability rights in the process of elaboration of an international convention demonstrates our common foundation—a fundamental aspiration of the humankind to establish an integrated community of its members based upon the principles of the universality of human rights—the fundamental freedoms, the dignity and worth of every human person.

As we strive to promote and protect the rights of persons with disabilities through the work on an international convention, we are embarking upon a significant endeavour in translating the universality of the human rights into reality and taking a concrete step toward a just and equitable society.

MY COMMITMENT TO AMERICA'S FUTURE

HON. MIKE FERGUSON

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 5, 2004

Mr. FERGUSON. Mr. Speaker, I would like to submit a paper by Mr. James Rieder, Jr., of Colonia, New Jersey, into the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD. I would like to offer my congratulations to Mr. Rieder on his accomplishment of winning the 2004 Voice of Democracy broadcast scriptwriting contest. Following is the paper that Mr. James Rieder, Jr., wrote:

"The meaning of America is not to be found in a life without toil. Freedom is not only bought with a great price; it is maintained by unremitting effort." (Thirtieth President of the United States of America, Calvin Coolidge)

Consider these words by the late former President. "The meaning of America is not to be found in a life without toil." In order to be a true American, one must not take his/her responsibilities lightly, and must instead strive to achieve not only what's best for himself/herself, but also what is good for all, no matter the task at hand. "Freedom is not only bought with a great price . . ." Our great nation was constructed from the ultimate sacrifices of others, their lives, but not just our forefathers, but our grandfathers and fathers, as well. ". . . it is maintained by unremitting effort." The United States does not only thrive on those who lost their lives on the battlefield, nor even on those

who govern our democratic nation, but on the American people. And because of this supreme responsibility, it is our duty as a free people to work hard in preserving our rights for the future generations. This is my commitment to America's future.

My commitment to America's future is to uphold the freedoms we were granted by the blood and sweat of our elders. For some, this may be as simple as voting on Election Day to empower a governing body capable of protecting our rights. For others, their commitment may lie in the front line, physically stopping those who endanger the American way of life. Does this mean that the soldier's blood runs redder than that of the simple voter? Of course not; both hearts beat strongly with American pride and both souls soar along with the majestic eagle. It is not what you are committed to, but how committed you are that counts. As for myself, I believe that I will perform whatever duties my nation calls on me to perform. I will be just as pleased if I can donate to a helpful cause, as I would be if I were to be called to a foreign shore to fight for our rights. Whatever my responsibility, I will certainly be dedicated.

My commitment to America's future is to educate my children and raise them in an environment where they, too, can respect and cherish their American citizenship. As Theodore Roosevelt stated, "To educate a man in mind and not in morals is to educate a menace to society." We must educate our future generation so that they may continue the legacy of our grand country. If we do not teach them properly, they may lose sight of the importance of their freedom, and the rights we presently have may exist as just unachievable aspirations. The path these children traverse leads to America's future. Thus, we must keep them on this path and ensure that they view the end of the journey with the utmost respect and dedication.

My most significant commitment to America's future would be to always keep my American pride strong within my heart, for Coolidge never specified whether the "unremitting effort" he mentioned should be physical or spiritual. I believe that you must first achieve a spiritual dedication to the United States before you can move on, and the more spiritually dedicated you are, the more American you become. And so, as long as the stars and stripes continue to wave grandly over these fifty unified states, so, too, will my heart beat with pride for my nation. I conclude yet again with this small, yet powerful, phrase from Mr. Coolidge and I implore you to always remember it and keep it in your heart, as I keep it in mine: "Freedom is not only bought with a great price; it is maintained by unremitting effort."

A TRIBUTE TO JANE BAKER

HON. TOM LANTOS

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 5, 2004

Mr. LANTOS. Mr. Speaker, it is with great honor and pride that I pay tribute to an extraordinary woman, Jane Baker. For the past twenty years Jane has been an inspiration to those who wish to make positive change in their communities, as she has dedicated herself to serving both San Mateo city and County, located in my congressional district, through the various public service positions she held.

Jane Baker was born in Hamilton, Ohio, and after graduating from Purdue University, she